

---

# BC PARKS

2012/13 Annual Report



BC Parks



Cover photo: Ne'ah' Conservancy—nestled between the Cassiar Mountains and the Liard Plains in northern British Columbia, the conservancy was established on March 26, 2013.

## Table of Contents

---

About BC Parks.....	1
Managing the System.....	<b>4</b>
Legislative Framework.....	4
Designations and Changes to the System.....	5
Land Acquisitions .....	8
Management Planning .....	9
Conservation Management .....	<b>13</b>
Ecological Integrity .....	13
Climate Change .....	13
Monitoring .....	14
Invasive Species Management.....	15
Shared Stewardship.....	<b>18</b>
Volunteers.....	18
Partnerships and Donations .....	22
Park Facility Operators .....	23
Engaging First Nations .....	24
Visitor Experiences.....	<b>25</b>
BC Parks Reservation Service.....	25
Attendance .....	26
Visitor Satisfaction .....	27
Improving Visitor Facilities.....	28
Public Safety .....	32
Engaging the Public .....	<b>34</b>
Community Engagement .....	34
BC Parks Website.....	36
Economic and Financial Benefits .....	<b>38</b>
Revenues and Operating Expenditures .....	38
Economic Benefits .....	40

# About BC Parks

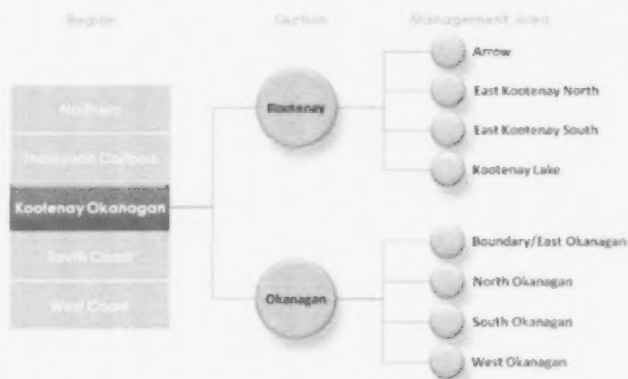
*British Columbia's protected areas system is a public trust with exceptional opportunities for conservation, outdoor recreation, education, scientific study and social interactions.*

## Who we are

BC Parks is part of the Ministry of Environment. BC Parks' services and management are delivered through a headquarters office in Victoria and five regional offices located throughout the province. The regions are subdivided into nine sections. The sections are further sub-divided into 49 management areas.

Most on-the-ground facilities and services are managed by contractors, called Park Facility Operators (PFOs). Some Park Facility Operators manage one park and others manage a grouping or bundle of parks in a specific location. Park Facility Operators provide onsite management, service and routine maintenance in day use areas and campgrounds. Standards for this service are set by BC Parks.

Example of BC PARKS organization hierarchy



BC PARKS has a total of 5 Regions, 9 Sections and 49 Management Areas.

## What we manage

British Columbia's protected areas system provides for the protection and maintenance of important natural and cultural values and outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities.

Protected areas contain some of the best representative elements of British Columbia's natural and cultural heritage. They include ecological reserves; provincial parks; conservancies; recreation areas; and protected areas established under the *Environment and Land Use Act*.

As of March 31, 2013, the system managed by BC Parks included 1,030 protected lands, covering approximately 14.4 percent of the province or approximately 14 million hectares. British Columbia's protected areas system is the third largest in North America (after the Canadian and United States national parks systems) and the largest provincial/territorial system in Canada.





*Protected Areas System Administered by BC Parks (as of March 31, 2013)*

Designation	Number	Area (hectares)
Ecological Reserves	148	160,452
Class A Parks	627	10,489,687
Class B Parks	2	3,778
Class C Parks	14	495
Conservancies	156	2,942,705
Protected Areas	80	383,439
Recreation Areas	3	5,933
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,030</b>	<b>13,986,209</b>

*What are...?*

**Ecological reserves** are reserved for ecological purposes including areas: for research and education; that maintain representative examples of natural ecosystems; that serve as examples of ecosystems modified by human activities and offer an opportunity to study their recovery; that protect rare or endangered flora and fauna; and, unique examples of botanical, zoological or geological phenomena. While most ecological reserves are open to the public, they are not established for outdoor recreation and no extractive activities are allowed.

**Class A parks** are lands dedicated to the preservation of their natural environment for the inspiration, use and enjoyment of the public. Development in a Class A park is limited to that which is necessary for the maintenance of its recreational values. Activities such as grazing, hay cutting and other uses (except commercial logging, mining or hydro electric development) that existed at the time the park was established may be allowed to continue in certain parks.

**Class B parks** differ from Class A parks in that a Class B park may permit a broader range of activities and uses provided that such uses are not detrimental to the recreational values of the park.

**Class C parks** differ from Class A parks in that a Class C park must be managed by a local board. They are generally small parks providing local recreational amenities.

**Conservancies** are set aside for: (a) the protection and maintenance of their biological diversity and natural environments; (b) the preservation and maintenance of social, ceremonial and cultural uses of First Nations; (c) the protection and maintenance of their recreational values; and (d) development or use of natural resources in a manner consistent with the purposes of (a), (b) and (c) above. Conservancies provide for a wider range of low impact, compatible economic opportunities than Class A parks, however, commercial logging, mining and hydro electric power generation, other than local run-of-the-river projects, are prohibited.

**Protected areas** are established by order in council under the *Environment and Land Use Act* and generally have one or more existing or proposed activities that are not usually allowed in a park (e.g., proposed industrial road, pipeline, transmission line or communication site). Allowable activities are determined by specific provisions when the area is established as well as relevant sections of the *Park Act* and regulations.

**Recreation areas** are set aside for public recreational use. The majority of these areas were established to allow a mineral resource evaluation under a time-limited tenure; no other industrial activities are permitted. All current recreation areas are being evaluated to determine if they should become fully protected or returned to integrated resource management lands.



*Beaver Valley Park*

# Managing the System

---

## Legislative Framework

*The provincial protected areas system is governed by several pieces of legislation.*

### *Ecological Reserve Act*

This Act provides for the establishment and administration of ecological reserves. Ecological reserves are established by inclusion to the schedules of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act* or by order in council under the Act.

### *Park Act*

This Act provides for the establishment, classification and management of parks, conservancies and recreation areas. Class A parks and conservancies are established by inclusion in the schedules to the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act* or by order in council under the Act. Class B and C parks and recreation areas are established by order in council under the Act.

### *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act*

This Act consolidates in its schedules most of the Class A parks, conservancies and ecological reserves for the purposes of the *Park Act* and the *Ecological Reserve Act*. The Act ensures that the boundaries of these areas cannot be modified to remove lands except by an Act of the Legislature.

### *Environment and Land Use Act*

This Act empowers a Land Use Committee of Cabinet to ensure all aspects of the preservation and maintenance of the natural environment are fully considered in the administration of land use and resource development. Orders can be made respecting the environment or land use, including the establishment of protected areas. The Act is under the administration of the Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations.

### *Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing Act*

Only sections 5(b), and 6 and 9 relate to the portfolio of the Minister of Environment. Section 5(b) describes one of the functions of the Ministry as being to encourage outdoor recreation, establish parks and conserve the natural scenic and historic features of British Columbia. Section 6 provides the Minister with the authority, for the purposes of the Act, to enter into agreements (subject to the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council) with the Government of Canada, the government of another province, or with any other person or a municipality. Section 9 gives authority to the minister to dispose of, acquire and manage land for ministry purposes.

### *Ministry of Environment Act*

This Act gives the Minister authority to acquire property and to enter into agreements with other governments with the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

## Special Accounts Appropriation and Control Act

This Act establishes special accounts, which are accounts in the general fund of the consolidated revenue fund where the authorization to expend money from the account is located in an Act other than a Supply Act. Section 9.6 of the Act deals with the Park Enhancement Fund. This section details what monies can be added to the special account and how the monies can be used by the Minister of Environment to enhance volunteer, research and other opportunities in parks and protected areas.

## Designations and Changes to the System

*Changes to British Columbia's protected areas system continue the ongoing process of designing and implementing a system that provides for improved protection of environmental and cultural values, providing recreational experiences and providing economic opportunities to communities.*

In 2012/13, the Province added more than **878,000 hectares** to the protected areas system. The additions included:

- 10 new conservancies and additions to an existing Class A park as a result of the Atlin Taku Land Use Plan;
- 17 new Class A parks and additions to five existing Class A parks as a result of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land-Use Plan Goal 2 (Special Feature) protected areas process;
- two new conservancies in the northwest of the province;
- marine foreshore areas to nine existing conservancies on Haida Gwaii;
- lands to five existing conservancies on Haida Gwaii;
- two new Class A parks; additions to three existing Class A parks and one ecological reserve; and four new protected areas on southern Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands; and
- one new protected area and additions to six existing Class A parks in the Lower Mainland and Okanagan.

### *Changes to British Columbia's Protected Areas System in 2012/13*

<b>New Protected Areas</b>	<b>Area (hectares)</b>
Beaver Valley Park	767
Becher's Prairie Park	125
Big Basin Park	998
Boyle Point Protected Area	9
Copper Johnny Park	656
Crater Lake Park	95
Dante's Inferno Park	376
Denman Island Park	552
Denman Island Protected Area	92
Donnelly Lake Park	814
Dragon Mountain Park	1,773

<b>New Protected Areas</b>	<b>Area (hectares)</b>
Eleven Sisters Park	3,052
Elk Falls Protected Area	5.65
Fraser River Breaks Park	883
Gerald Island Park	12
Golden Gate/Xáat Yádi Aani Conservancy	5,981
Hanna-Tintina Conservancy	23,702
Indian Lake-Hitchcock Creek/Át Ch'ini Shà Conservancy	52,784
Long Creek Park	254
Monarch Mountain/A Xéegi Deyi Conservancy	424
Mount Minto/K'iyán Conservancy	5,657
Nakina-Inklin Rivers/Yāwu Yaa Conservancy	167,259
Nakina-Inklin Rivers (Kuthai Area)/Yāwu Yaa Conservancy	26,047
Ne'āh' Conservancy	233,304
Patterson Lake Park	1,595
Punti Island Park	12
Quesnel Lake Park	872
Rainbow/Q'iwentem Park	385
Redbrush Park	1,165
Stawamus Chief Protected Area	2.36
Taku River/T'akú Téix Conservancy	80,465
Titfetown Park	1,070
Tutshi Lake/T'ooch' Áayi Conservancy	19,640
Upper Gladys River/Watsix Conservancy	31,103
Upper Klinaklini Protected Area	62
Willison Creek - Nelson Lake/Sit' Héeni Conservancy	10,300
<b>Total area of new protected areas</b>	<b>672,293.01</b>

<b>Area Added to Existing Protected Areas</b>	<b>Area (hectares)</b>
Atlin/A Téix gi aan Tlein Park (name changed from Atlin Park)	23,319
Boyle Point Park	52
Bridge Lake Park	380
Cultus Lake Park	202

<b>Area Added to Existing Protected Areas</b>	<b>Area (hectares)</b>
Daawuuxusda Conservancy	45,982
Damaxya Conservancy	7
Duu Guusd Conservancy	84,216
E. C. Manning Park	12,425
Flat Lake Park	26
Gowlland Tod Park	0.68
Inkaneep Park	0.9
Kamdis Conservancy	826
Kungxalas Conservancy	12,374
K'uuna Gwaay Conservancy	13,503
Main Lake Park	12
Marble Range Park	2,215
Moose Valley Park	161
Mount Maxwell Ecological Reserve	22
Nang Xaldangaas Conservancy	9,798
Porteau Cove Park	1
Schoolhouse Lake Park	544
Skagit Valley Park	16
Skaha Bluffs Park	310
Tlall Conservancy	22
Yaaguun Gandlaay Conservancy	239
<b>Total area added to existing protected areas</b>	<b>206,653.58</b>

<b>Area Removed from Existing Protected Areas</b>	<b>Area (hectares)</b>
Cultus Lake Park	11
Dzawadi/Upper Klinaklini River Conservancy (area became Upper Klinaklini Protected Area)	62
Elk Falls Park (area became Elk Falls Protected Area)	5.65
Inkaneep Park	0.24
Kamdis Conservancy	0.236
Mara Meadows Park	7.3
Moose Valley Park	50
Stawamus Chief Park (area became Stawamus Chief Protected Area)	2.36



<b>Area Removed from Existing Protected Areas</b>	<b>Area (hectares)</b>
Upper Violet Creek Park	0.88
Wakes Cove Park	0.1
<b>Total area removed from existing protected areas</b>	<b>139.766</b>

<b>Protected Areas Cancelled</b>	<b>Area (hectares)</b>
Atlin Recreation Area (9,210 hectares added to Atlin/A Téix gi aan Tlein Park; 29,235 hectares transferred to the administration of the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations)	38,445
Barkerville Park (transferred to the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations for a Provincial Heritage Site)	55
Cascade Recreation Area (upgraded and added to E. C. Manning Park)	11,858
Christie Memorial Park (transferred to the Regional District of Okanagan- Similkameen for local park purposes)	3
Porteau Cove Recreation Area (upgraded and added to Porteau Cove Park)	1
Truman Dagnus Lockheed Park (will be transferred to the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations to be leased for regional park purposes)	7
<b>Total area cancelled</b>	<b>50,369</b>

## Land Acquisitions

From time to time, the provincial government acquires lands for protected areas through purchase, donation and/or exchange to fill key gaps in the protected areas system. Solutions that include partnerships contribute to successful projects.

In 2012/13, 246 hectares of lands were acquired for protected area purposes. The lands acquired were a 242-hectare property within Tweedsmuir Park and a 4-hectare property adjacent to Syringa Park.

<b>Land Acquisitions</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>
<b>Land purchase value</b>	<b>\$9,134,279</b>	<b>\$7,390,000</b>	<b>\$65,000</b>



## Management Planning

A management plan is the most important document for a protected area. The management plan sets out the high-level framework from which all subsequent protected area management, planning and implementation will take place.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Percentage of protected areas with valid approved management plans	66%	68%	67%

### What it means:

In 2012/13, 16 management plans covering 18 protected areas were approved. Over two-thirds of protected areas now have valid management direction. Even with the approval of these management plans, the overall percentage of areas with approved management direction decreased by one percent because the number of protected areas in the system increased by 30 protected areas during the year.

- In the Kootenay Section, management plans were approved for Valhalla Park and the globally-significant Mount Assiniboine Park, part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Four protected areas on Salt Spring Island have new approved management direction: Mount Erskine and Mount Maxwell parks, and Mount Maxwell and Mount Tuam ecological reserves.
- Management plans were approved for three small protected areas in the Thompson Section: Victor Lake, Seton Portage Historic and Monte Lake parks.
- The management plan for Qwiqualaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy located on the south Central Coast was collaboratively developed and signed by BC Parks and the Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em First Nation.
- Five management plans for seven coastal protected areas (six conservancies and one park) on the south Central Coast were approved by BC Parks and the Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'xw First Nation: Allison Harbour Marine Park, and Mahpahkum-Ahkwunā/Deserters-Walker, Ug'wíwey/Cape Caution, Ug'wíwey/Cape Caution-Blunden Bay, Ne'gíł/Nekite Estuary, Tsa-Latł/Smokehouse and Wawley/Seymour Estuary conservancies.
- The Huchsduwachsd Nuyem Jeas/Kitlope Heritage Conservancy management plan, previously approved by BC Parks in October 2011, was approved by the Haisla First Nation in May 2012.

### How it's measured:

Only 'valid' management plans are included. Management plans are considered to be 'valid' if the management plan still provides adequate strategic direction and guidance for the management of a protected area.

There were also three draft management plans released for public review through the BC Parks website. All management planning processes include a minimum of a 30-day web-based public review of the draft management plan.

## New Tools to Assist Management Planning

Several new management planning tools were finalised and approved to assist BC Parks planners, planning teams and partners to develop consistent and high quality protected area management plans. The toolkit includes four guidelines and three templates:

- BC Parks Protected Area Management Planning Manual;
- BC Parks Guide to Writing Management Plans;
- BC Parks Management Plan Review and Approval Guide;
- Zoning Framework;
- BC Parks Management Plan Template;
- BC Parks Management Plan Amendment Template; and
- Management Planning Project Plan Template.

<b>Management Plans Approved in 2012/13</b>	<b>Protected Areas</b>
Allison Harbour Marine Park, Ug̱w̱iwey/Cape Caution Conservancy, Ug̱w̱iwey/Cape Caution-Blunden Bay Conservancy Management Plan	Allison Harbour Marine Park Ug̱w̱iwey/Cape Caution Conservancy Ug̱w̱iwey/Cape Caution-Blunden Bay Conservancy
Mahpahkum-Aẖkwuṉa/Deserters-Walker Conservancy Management Plan	Mahpahkum-Aẖkwuṉa/Deserters-Walker Conservancy
Monte Lake Park Management Plan	Monte Lake Park
Mount Assiniboine Park Management Plan	Mount Assiniboine Park
Mount Erskine Park Management Plan	Mount Erskine Park
Mount Maxwell Park Management Plan	Mount Maxwell Park
Mount Maxwell Ecological Reserve Management Plan	Mount Maxwell Ecological Reserve
Mount Tuam Ecological Reserve Management Plan	Mount Tuam Ecological Reserve
Ne̱g̱iḻ/Nekite Estuary Conservancy Management Plan	Ne̱g̱iḻ/Nekite Estuary Conservancy
Qwiquallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy Management Plan	Qwiquallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy
Seton Portage Historic Park Management Plan	Seton Portage Historic Park
Tsa-Laṯi/Smokehouse Conservancy Management Plan	Tsa-Laṯi/Smokehouse Conservancy
Valhalla Park Management Plan	Valhalla Park
W̱aw̱ley/Seymour Estuary Conservancy Management Plan	W̱aw̱ley/Seymour Estuary Conservancy

## Success Story—Collaborative Management Planning and Enhanced Economic Opportunities Agreements

In early 2013, BC Parks and two Ngnwakolas member First Nations, the Mamalilikulla-'Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em First Nation and the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nation, held signing ceremonies marking the completion of six conservancy management plans and the province's first agreements regarding First Nations' enhanced access to economic opportunities.

BC Parks and the Mamalilikulla-'Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em First Nation signed a management plan for Qwiquallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy, located in the Johnstone Strait. The conservancy and its recommended foreshore addition protect forested upland and a dynamic and highly

productive stretch of coastline, which is important culturally to the Mamalilikulla-'Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em First Nation and to visitors kayaking and camping in the area.

With the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nation, BC Parks jointly signed five management plans for conservancies within the First Nation's traditional territory on the south Central Coast of British Columbia, encompassing a total of more than 50,000 hectares. These conservancies protect:

- coastal estuaries (Negiā/Nekite Estuary and Wawley/Seymour Estuary);
- a complete island grouping in the Queen Charlotte Strait (Mahpahkum-Ahkwunā/Deserters Walker);
- a 60-kilometre section of coastline (Ugwiwa'/Cape Caution, Ugwiwa'/Cape Caution-Blunden Bay and Allison Harbour Marine Park); and
- the second largest conservancy on the south Central Coast, which encompasses a diverse range of ecosystems from estuary to old-growth coastal forest and alpine tundra (Tsa-Lat'/Smokehouse).

BC Parks and the First Nations also signed an implementation framework for the identification and provision of enhanced access to economic opportunities in the conservancies within each of the First Nations' traditional territories. This agreement ensures the First Nations' economic interests in protected areas are also taken into consideration during the adjudication process.

The signing ceremonies are the culmination of five years of working together under a collaborative management agreement. The signing of these documents is a significant accomplishment, but also signifies the start of the next phase of the collaborative relationship as the parties work together to implement recommendations in the management plans for the benefit of all British Columbians.



*BC Parks, Mamalilikulla-'Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em First Nation Chief and Ngnwakolas staff following the signing ceremony in Campbell River*



*A highlight of the signing ceremony in Port Hardy—Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw school children performing a ceremonial dance*



*Minister Lake and Hereditary Chief Walkus with BC Parks and Ngnwakolas staff at the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw signing ceremony in Port Hardy*

## Intergovernmental Relations

*BC Parks works with federal, territorial and provincial governments on areas of mutual interest in the planning and management of protected areas.*

### *Canadian Parks Council*

The Canadian Parks Council is an organization consisting of senior managers representing Canada's national, provincial and territorial parks agencies. It provides a Canada-wide forum for inter-governmental information sharing and action on protected areas that:

- promotes excellence in protected areas planning and management;
- advocates protected areas values and interests;
- encourages cooperation and provides support to member agencies on parks; and
- protected areas issues and initiatives.

BC Parks participates on the Canadian Parks Council to share information and ideas with other governments on protected areas within Canada. Data on British Columbia's protected areas system is provided to the Canadian Council on Ecological Areas, which is responsible for maintaining a single, accurate, nation-wide database on the status of protected areas across the country, known as CARTS (Conservation Areas Reporting and Tracking System).

### *Marine Protected Areas*

BC Parks works with the federal government on marine protected areas establishment, including proposals for a National Marine Conservation Area Reserve in the southern Strait of Georgia (Parks Canada), a National Marine Wildlife Management Area around the Scott Islands (Canadian Wildlife Service), a Marine Protected Area in Hecate Strait/Queen Charlotte Sound Glass Sponge Reefs (Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada), and a Marine Protected Area at Race Rocks, offshore from Victoria (Department of Fisheries and Oceans). These proposals are at various stages of development, but all of them require cooperation between the federal departments and the Government of British Columbia.

### *Canadian Heritage Rivers*

Representing British Columbia, BC Parks participates in the Canadian Heritage Rivers program, which recognizes Canada's outstanding examples of river heritage. Three rivers in British Columbia are designated as Canadian Heritage Rivers: the Fraser, the Cowichan and the Kicking Horse.

This year, a decadal monitoring report for the Cowichan River was initiated through a partnership that included a large number of governments and non-government community stewardship organizations. The intention of the monitoring report is to ensure a Canadian Heritage River continues to possess the outstanding values for which it was designated. In the case of the Cowichan, the draft report found that this was the case and recommended continued status as a Canadian Heritage River.



*Cowichan River Park*

# Conservation Management

## Ecological Integrity

*Ecological integrity is an important concept that influences protected area management to ensure natural areas are well managed into the future.*

BC Parks continues to be committed to the proactive stewardship of ecological integrity. At this time the performance measures focus on the consistent use of conservation and business process tools that have been provided to regional staff.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2011/12	2012/13
Percentage of BC Parks sections (9) that conducted annual management planning	100	89
Percentage of BC Parks sections (9) that supported the annual management planning process with the use of the Conservation Risk Assessment database	80	78
Percentage of BC Parks management areas (49) that updated information in the Conservation Risk Assessment database	25	51
Number of management areas (49) that added data to the Conservation Risk Assessment database	14	33

### What it means:

BC Parks regional operations are subdivided into sections (9). The sections are further sub-divided into management areas (49).

Annual management planning (AMPs) is a business process used to identify and prioritize work projects in a section or management area. Annual management plans have been standardized across the province and are now required to be completed annually. 89 percent of the sections conducted annual management planning in 2012/13.

The Conservation Risk Assessment (CRA) is a database that catalogues the values and threats in each protected area in the province. It is used as input to many of the planning and evaluation processes in protected area management, including discussions that occur in the annual management planning process. Seventy-eight percent of the sections supported their annual management plans with the use of the Conservation Risk Assessment database.

The Conservation Risk Assessment database is most effective when information is added by regional staff on a continual basis. There are 49 management areas in BC Parks. Twenty-one areas added data on special features and 12 areas added data on threats. Combined, 51 percent of management areas were updated with information in the Conservation Risk Assessment.

## Climate Change

*The British Columbian protected areas system plays a key role in the Province's response to climate change.*

Climate-induced changes in protected areas are resulting from extreme weather events, droughts, flooding, insect outbreaks, invasive species, coastal erosion and wildfires. More subtle effects are occurring as a result of the gradual increase in temperature (especially in the winter)



including shrinking glaciers, rising sea levels, changes to the water cycle and the movement of organisms. These changes, while not dramatic on a day-to-day basis, are affecting the distribution of species and the organization of ecosystems.

The future of protected areas management will be in maintaining functioning ecosystems and facilitating the movement of species within and across boundaries. Large landscape level processes have always played an important role in sustaining ecosystems. These processes are now recognized as being critical in maintaining the resilience of the natural world. One of the key ways that the British Columbia's protected areas system can address these processes is by focussing on protecting large landscapes.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2011/12	2012/13
Percentage of <b>terrestrial</b> protected areas network* in large landscapes >2,700 km <sup>2</sup>	59	60
Percentage of <b>terrestrial</b> protected areas network in landscapes >1,000 km <sup>2</sup>	71	72
Percentage of <b>terrestrial</b> protected areas network in landscapes >500 km <sup>2</sup>	80	80

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2011/12	2012/13
Percentage of <b>nearshore</b> protected areas network in large landscapes >270 km <sup>2</sup>	40	57
Percentage of <b>nearshore</b> protected areas network in landscapes >100 km <sup>2</sup>	55	72
Percentage of <b>nearshore</b> protected areas network in landscapes >50 km <sup>2</sup>	67	79

\* Protected areas network includes all provincially and federally designated protected areas.

#### What it means:

The terrestrial thresholds are based on work identifying minimum landscape areas to maintain mammals sensitive to disturbance. In nearshore ecosystems, research indicates that the optimal size of protected areas may be an order of magnitude less than in the terrestrial environment. In 2012/13, 60 percent of the protected areas in British Columbia are part of large protected landscapes.

#### Monitoring

*Monitoring is particularly important during a period of rapid change. It is difficult to predict exactly where and how fast the change is occurring. Monitoring the changes can help illustrate the rate and variability across the province.*

The Long-term Ecological Monitoring (LTEM) program was initiated at BC Parks in 2010/11. While the monitoring framework identifies eight biomes that have associated data collection protocols, BC Parks has chosen to be directly involved in setting up plots and collecting data in five biomes—alpine-subalpine, forest, grassland, wetland and intertidal. Using standardized protocols, plots will be set up in at least two biomes within each management area, which will result in about 100 permanent plots at full implementation. The program is



*Park Ranger assessing berry production in Greenstone Mountain Park*

based on the principles of citizen science, and volunteers assist staff in the data collection.

In 2012/13, data were collected from 11 sites with 10 management areas having at least one site where data were collected.

#### Success Story—Park Rangers and Volunteers Essential for Long-term Ecological Monitoring Success

The number of monitoring plots established in the summer of 2012 was an increase of over 500 percent from 2011, with five wetland plots, two intertidal plots, 10 grassland plots, four alpine plots, and five forest plots either fully or partially established. Most of the activity took place in the Thompson Cariboo, Kootenay Okanagan and West Coast regions, although actions were taken throughout the province.

Park Rangers played a pivotal role in almost every instance. They learned to identify grassland, alpine and intertidal species. They braved the rain and 40°C temperatures, and through it all they were positive and enthusiastic. Every single Park Ranger brought positive energy to this project.

Volunteers also provided key assistance by setting up some of the plots, including a wetland plot in Yellow Point Bog Ecological Reserve by Ecological Reserve Wardens, an alpine plot in Cathedral Park by University of British Columbia field course class and an alpine plot in the Muskwa-Kechika by a field ecology class from the University of Northern British Columbia.



*BC Parks staff estimating plant cover in a grassland transect at Columbia Lake Park*

## Invasive Species Management

*Invasive species are non-native species whose introduction into British Columbia causes economic or environmental damage or harm to human health.*

### *BC Parks Invasive Species Program*

The BC Parks Invasive Species Program is successful due to the participation of knowledgeable people and many partners. BC Parks works with other government agencies and non-profit organizations to reduce the detrimental impacts of invasive plants on Crown land. The two main partners of the BC Parks Invasive Species Program (the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure) fund high priority invasive plant treatments on Crown land (including provincial protected areas) with funds distributed to 17 regional committees throughout the province.

The invasive species work that is required in British Columbia's protected areas system is prioritized using the BC Parks Invasive Plant Threat Analysis, developed in 2010 and updated in 2012. This



analysis produces a priority list of species that are the most critical to manage in vulnerable habitats in protected areas.

BC Parks conservation specialists had a significant impact in the invasive species program in 2012. Seven conservation specialists joined the regional invasive species committees and managed treatments and inventories for their respective regions. There were 44 protected areas treated in 2012/13. Treatments were varied and included removing Scotch broom around deltoid balsamroot plants (a species at risk) in various protected areas and divers pulling milfoil in Champion Lakes Park.

#### 2012/13 Budget and Treatments

Budget	Treatments:	BC Parks Budget:	\$105,000
		Park Enhancement Fund:	\$ 17,680
		Skagit Environmental Endowment Committee:	\$ 18,000
		Habitat Conservation Trust Fund:	\$ 15,000
	<b>Total Budget:</b>		<b>\$155,680</b>
Treatments	Areas treated with herbicide*:	306 sites (totalling 22 hectares)	
	Areas treated manually:	110 sites (totally 8 hectares)	
	<b>Total Treatments:</b>	<b>416 sites (30 hectares)</b>	

\* Herbicides are only used on sites where no other treatment is effective and as a last resort.

#### Success Story—Haynes Point Park Invasive Tree Removal and Ecosystem Restoration

Prior to European settlement, Haynes Point, located in the south Okanagan, was a dry shrub steppe antelope brush ecosystem with undisturbed riparian and wetland ecosystems. Rare amphibians and reptiles used these ecosystems and at least 16 rare plants were found along the beaches, wetlands, and upland vegetation communities.



Since then, changes to water levels and water quality in Osoyoos Lake, development, wetland infill and introduction of invasive species, have greatly altered the vegetation of Haynes Point. There is increasing tree cover that is dominated by non-native and invasive species, primarily Russian olive, Siberian elm and Tree of Heaven. These species are highly competitive with native species, and will completely alter native ecosystem form and function if allowed to persist. For example, Siberian elms that have successfully colonized this area are shading out the antelope brush, a large shrub (see photo below) native to the area.

BC Parks initiated a multi-year project in 2012/13 to remove invasive trees and re-introduce native vegetation in the park. Among the anticipated benefits are an increase in representation of native ecosystems; improved ecosystem function and resilience to climate change; a reduction in the spread of invasive tree species; and improved habitat suitability for rare species.



In fall of 2012, BC Parks staff and volunteers removed Siberian elm (see photo below) and planted 125 antelope brush seedlings. BC Parks staff will be monitoring the success of this work, continuing restoration efforts and applying what is learned.

This project has brought some focus and attention to 'invasive trees' and their impacts. The fruit of the Russian olive tree is a great source of food and nutrients for wintering birds. While this suggests the plant plays an important ecological role in bird habitat, ecologists have found that breeding bird species richness is actually greater in areas with a higher concentration of native vegetation.

An interpretative sign was installed describing the project purpose and scope. The Okanagan staff will continue with education and awareness programs to ensure long term success of the project.



# Shared Stewardship

---

*BC Parks offers numerous ways for individuals, community groups, organizations and corporations to support the provincial protected areas system. Contributions made through volunteering, partnerships and donations enhance the protection and management of the province's protected areas system.*

Individuals, community groups, organizations and corporations across the province volunteer their time, energy and resources to a wide range of activities, from trail building, maintenance, and infrastructure improvements to ecological monitoring and research, restoration projects and interpretive programming. In addition to volunteer opportunities, partnerships are encouraged with universities, non-profit organizations, businesses and community groups with a shared interest in stewarding protected areas. BC Parks also welcomes contributions from individuals, corporations, and the non-profit sector to acquire and protect more land and works very closely with Park Facility Operators and First Nations in the management of protected areas.

## Volunteers

*Every year thousands of dedicated volunteers contribute time, energy and expertise to BC Parks.*

Building on the momentum of BC Parks' 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2011, BC Parks initiated a public and staff engagement process in 2012 to inform the development of a Volunteer Strategy to revitalize the Volunteer Program. Based on feedback from the public and input from BC Parks staff, a draft Volunteer Strategy was released for public comment in June 2012 and the final [Volunteer Strategy](#) was released in September 2012.

The goal of the Volunteer Strategy is to strengthen capacity within the BC Parks system of protected areas and to create a lasting natural legacy by improving the volunteer experience. BC Parks aims to do this by:

- developing a consistent and sustainable volunteer program;
- ensuring that volunteers are actively engaged as part of core business; and,
- building public awareness, enthusiasm and commitment for volunteering in British Columbia's protected areas.

Implementation of the BC Parks Volunteer Strategy began in 2012 with several significant improvements to the BC Parks Volunteer Program, including:

- Establishing a Provincial Community Engagement Specialist position to provide oversight of the Volunteer Program and maintain consistency. The position is responsible for public outreach, youth engagement initiatives and community partnerships.
- Launching an online [Volunteer Community](#) to support current volunteers and connect with future ones.
- Approval from Risk Management Branch at the Ministry of Finance to develop a program to offer volunteer groups Commercial General Liability and Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance.

### Support for Volunteer Projects

In 2012/13, BC Parks invested \$200,000 from the Park Enhancement Fund to support community and volunteer projects across the province. The investment supported over 50 projects spanning all five regions of the province. A wide variety of projects were completed—from invasive species removal to interpretation, trail work to filming an informational video for visitors on the K'tzim-a-deen Grizzly Bear Sanctuary. Based on feedback from staff and community partners, the success of these projects lies in:

- commitment of organized volunteers and partners;
- flexibility from BC Parks staff;
- leveraging additional resources; and
- cooperation among everyone involved.

#### Volunteer Program Highlights for 2012/13

Park Enhancement Fund Investment	\$200,000
Total Value of Projects (i.e., leveraged resources)	>\$880,000
Number of Citizens Reached	>9,882
Number of Volunteers	>1,333
Number of Volunteer Hours Contributed	>12,614
Community Partners	>90

### 2012 Volunteer Awards

BC Parks values the contributions that volunteers and other community partners make every year. To recognize outstanding contributions, BC Parks selects recipients for annual achievement awards for people and organizations that go above and beyond. This year winners received a framed print presented to them at a local awards presentation hosted by regional BC Parks staff.

#### 2012 Volunteer of the Year—Jarrett Teague



Jarrett has been volunteering at John Dean Park on southern Vancouver Island since 1989. Jarrett's first experience with the park was at the age of seven on a visit to the park with his father—he's been hooked ever since. He has worked tirelessly to preserve its beauty, protect its natural values, and to make it more accessible and enjoyable for visitors.

Jarrett's long service for BC Parks at John Dean Park can be seen virtually everywhere in the park. From his creation, restoration, and maintenance of the hand-carved signage throughout the trail system, to his maintenance of trail water bars and culverts, to the absence of garbage and English ivy.

Over the years Jarrett has become a very familiar face to many park visitors. He is recognized by many as a subject matter expert on all things having to do with the history of the park. He is always open to questions from visitors, and on request, has treated people and groups to guided walks through some of the historical gems of this park. Jarrett's passion for the history of this place and its namesake has resulted in him writing and publishing four books on the subject and establishing and maintaining a website dedicated to providing current and historical information on the [park and John Dean](#).



### 2012 Volunteer Group of the Year—Shuswap Trails Alliance

The Shuswap Trails Alliance has been volunteering with BC Parks for seven years across the Shuswap and North Okanagan areas. They work collaboratively to create efficiencies in trail building, marketing, conservation, research, protection, maintenance, and planning. Among other achievements, the Shuswap Trails Alliance has:

- created a link between BC Parks and communities in the North Okanagan and Shuswap, and also between BC Parks, local First Nations and other local communities;
- upgraded or constructed and maintained many kilometres of trails in BC Parks that are considered major tourist draws to local communities;
- conducted valuable research on wildlife, plant and water values in BC Parks—much of which is being used by BC Parks staff and ecological reserve wardens; and
- successfully protected a multitude of wetland areas from motor vehicle destruction.

While the number, diversity and quality of projects the Shuswap Trails Alliance has completed in British Columbia's protected areas system is both impressive and immensely valuable, the shared success, understanding and relationship building with the local community and First Nations has been of immeasurable value to BC Parks.



### 2012 Volunteer Legacy Award—Joop Burgerjon



Joop Burgerjon has been the secretary, treasurer, web master, and driving force behind the Sargeant Bay Society since 1978. The society is a not-for-profit, non-government organization, whose objective is the protection of the natural habitat of Sargeant Bay, its watershed and neighbouring wetlands. Joop has been a committed volunteer for over 40 years to BC Parks.

Sargeant Bay is situated on the Sunshine Coast, 8 kilometres west of the village of Sechelt. Much of this area is located within Sargeant Bay Park, which protects 145 hectares of diverse shoreline, wetland, forest and bog, and 5 hectares of marine foreshore. In its role as a volunteer stewardship organization the Sargeant Bay Society works closely with BC Parks.

Joop helped to create the original vision for the society, promoting the protection of the bay from development, and was instrumental in leading the initial task of restoring the wetland and its associated wildlife habitats. His vision and quiet leadership role in protecting and restoring the natural values and recreational opportunities of the park have continued to grow and expand through decades of involvement in the park. His enthusiasm and commitment attracts other volunteers to join in his efforts.

Joop has been tirelessly committed to Sargeant Bay Park since the Sargeant Bay Society was first formed. He has worked hard to enhance every aspect of the park; protecting its natural values, developing its recreational features, and educating park visitors to understand and appreciate the park and its role in the system. It takes individuals like Joop to keep a group like the Sargeant Bay Society active, engaged and relevant for almost four decades.

### 2012 Community Partner of the Year—Horne Lake Caves Park



In 2011, BC Parks signed a formal partnership agreement with the Canadian Cave Conservancy, BC Speological Federation, Vancouver Island Cave Exploration Group and Island Pacific Adventures. This agreement formalizes shared stewardship and sponsorship for Horne Lake Caves Park. The agreement supports shared goals of preserving the unique karsts features of the park and educating visitors on the importance of caves. The Canadian Cave Conservancy and its affiliated cave groups, BC Speological Federation and Vancouver Island Cave Exploration Group, have been involved with Horne Lake

Caves Park prior to the park being designated in 1971. The Canadian Cave Conservancy groups have been involved in all aspects of Horne Lake Caves Park from operating cave tours to facility enhancement, public education and conservation management. In addition, the Canadian Cave Conservancy and its affiliates have been instrumental in supporting the new Horne Lake Caves Visitor Centre, the only cave education centre in Canada.

The Canadian Cave Conservancy, BC Speological Federation and Vancouver Island Cave Exploration Group also provide support to other provincial cave parks in British Columbia. The members of these groups respond to cave rescues, provide advice on cave mapping and protection of significant sites and provide input into management plans.

Island Pacific Adventures has been successfully operating Horne Lake Caves Park for over 20 years as the Park Facility Operator. In the past 20 years they have been a key component to the success of the visitors' experience and promotion of cave protection. The company and its owner Richard Varela have received numerous regional tourism awards for the promotion of Horne Lake Caves Park.

The Canadian Cave Conservancy, the BC Speological Federation, Vancouver Island Cave Exploration Group and Island Pacific Adventures have contributed in providing financial and labour resources and expertise in maximizing BC Parks dollars on enhancements for cave protection and public education. For every \$1 that BC Parks spent on joint projects, these groups contributed \$8 of in-kind funding.



HIGHLIGHT

During the week of September 15-23, 2012, BC Parks participated in the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup as part of the launch of the revitalized volunteer program. BC Parks worked with volunteer partners across the province to host cleanup events in 10 parks across the province.

## Partnerships and Donations

BC Parks offers numerous ways for individuals and organizations to support the provincial protected areas system.

The BC Parks Partnership and Donation Program is designed to provide opportunities for individual citizens, community groups, non-government agencies and private corporations to work with BC Parks on mutually beneficial projects. Through the Park Enhancement Fund, supporters can donate to specific projects or protected areas and receive an official tax receipt for their contribution.

This past year, BC Parks introduced a new Planned Giving Program for individuals and families to consider leaving a bequest or donating a financial security or land to BC Parks. Not only do these types of gifts provide tax benefits to the donor, they also allow donors to support specific projects or protected areas of their choice.

While donation amounts vary significantly from year to year and cannot be predicted, it is clear that BC Parks has become known as a valuable partner, attracting significant donations to the Park Enhancement Fund since its establishment in 2008. Over the last five years, the Park Enhancement Fund has raised over \$1.5 million from donations and community and corporate partnerships.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Corporate Partnerships and Sponsorships	\$132,301	\$202,000	\$55,000
Community Partnerships	\$33,983	\$95,718	\$25,280
Donations and Make Your Mark Program	\$10,725	\$255,891	\$193,492
Other (e.g., merchandise)	\$1,161	\$1,643	\$2,690
<b>Total partnership contributions to the Park Enhancement Fund</b>	<b>\$178,170</b>	<b>\$555,252</b>	<b>\$276,462</b>

Donations of financial securities are accepted through BC Parks' Planned Giving Program. For more information on this new program, please visit [BC Parks' Planned Giving Program](#).

### Success Story—Funds for a Hiking Trail in Garibaldi Park

In 2011, an anonymous donor approached BC Parks to donate \$214,000 over three years in financial securities to upgrade a hiking trail in one of his favourite places—Garibaldi Park. This is his story.

*"I first went up to Garibaldi Park in August of 1966. I flew in with a party of 12. We booked to stay for a week in the Queen Charlotte Airlines Hut on Garibaldi Lake—I remember it costing \$1 each per night.*

*My son was in the PNE parade so he, my daughter and my wife flew in from the Bayshore Inn in a 3-seater Cessna with all the food. The rest of us drove to Daisy Lake near Whistler, left the cars in the bushes, and waited for the Cessna to shuttle us, our two dogs, clothes and hiking gear to Garibaldi Lake. It took three loads of 450 pounds to get us all up there. My things have changed!*



*I've been to Garibaldi about every 2 or 3 years since. The flowers in 2008 were the most beautiful I've seen in the fifty years. I have many fond memories of times spent in this magnificent park.*

*Now I'm at the stage in my life where I've sold my house, am renting, and have money available for charitable purposes...Through this process I see the government allocate my tax dollars to trail work in parks they may not otherwise do, instead of using them for other government projects that rank lower on my scale of values.*

*I recently chose to make donations over three successive years to upgrade a trail to one of my favourite places in Garibaldi Park. These donations are paying for the installation of two bridges over river crossings and 11 kilometres of trail reconstruction from Elfin Lakes to Mamquam Lake. I wanted to give something to future generations so they could experience the joy I felt when discovering these wild places. The Mamquam Trail is my legacy and gift to future park visitors."*

Anonymous, Vancouver resident



New bridge over Ring Creek,  
Mamquam Lake Trail, Garibaldi Park

The Mamquam Lake Trail is scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2013.

## Park Facility Operators

Park Facility Operators provide operational services to maintain and enhance the quality of the visitor experience, the condition of the facilities and the ecological values that support British Columbia's protected areas system.

Services were originally provided by Park Facility Operators under individual park operation agreements. In 2003, many parks were grouped or "bundled" to increase efficiency and efficacy. In 2012/13, 22 Park Facility Operators operated 29 bundles of parks—including frontcountry areas of 201 parks in the province. In addition, 50 parks were operated under individual contracts with Park Facility Operators (i.e., non-bundled parks).

Park Facility Operators are a passionate group of people who believe in providing the highest quality of service to ensure all visitors enjoy their outdoor experience. Some of their responsibilities include providing visitors with quality campground and day use services, maintaining and enhancing facilities, and conserving the natural, cultural and recreation values. They are dedicated to upholding BC Parks' standards to ensure an efficiently run protected areas system.

### Success Story—2012 Park Facility Operator of the Year—Northwest Escapes

The Park Facility Operator of the Year award is presented to a Park Facility Operator that is recognized for excellence in park operations. Review criteria include customer service, community engagement and the relationship with BC Parks.

For 2012, the award has been given to Northwest Escapes. Northwest Escapes operates all of the frontcountry campgrounds and day use areas in the Skeena Region, which includes 13 parks, nine campgrounds, six day-use areas, two group sites, visitor centres and water treatment systems. The owner, Rob Seaton, has operated these bundled parks for the last 10 years.

Northwest Escapes has a very strong commitment to improving visitor satisfaction and services in the parks they operate and they are actively involved with local community groups and events such as Family Fishing Weekend, Dragon Boat Races, Triathlons and School Forestry Week.



### Engaging First Nations

*BC Parks engages with First Nations in a variety of ways and through a variety of different initiatives and programs.*

BC Parks has negotiated a broad range of collaborative agreements with First Nations which allow greater First Nation participation in the management of British Columbia's protected areas.

In 2012/13, two collaborative management agreements were signed—with the Haisla Nation and the Babine Lake Nation. Collaborative management agreements define how BC Parks and First Nations will work together to plan and manage the protected areas within that First Nation's traditional territory.

### Success Story—Okanagan Youth Canoe Journey

The Penticton Indian Band and BC Parks worked together to host the First Annual Okanagan Youth Canoe Journey that travelled the length of Okanagan Lake in August 2012. Over 130 Aboriginal youth and support crews from the Okanagan, North Vancouver, Collingwood, Squamish, 100 Mile House, Sumas and Canim Lake canoed the 110 kilometres from Vernon to Penticton over a six-day period.



Overnight camping for the participants was arranged in three parks. The Park Facility Operators that maintain and operate these popular campsites and day use areas were very accommodating, and fully supported and sponsored the event. Success of the event has provided both an excellent experience for participating youth and has helped build and maintain a positive working relationship with Okanagan First Nations and BC Parks.

# Visitor Experiences

British Columbia's system of protected areas offers experiences as unforgettable and diverse as the province's natural landscapes. Travelling alone or with friends or family, BC Parks has opportunities for visitors of all ages, in all seasons to explore and enjoy—from vehicle-accessible to wilderness camping to group picnicking, boating, and backcountry cabins from fishing and winter sports to wildlife viewing, hiking, cycling and swimming—an adventure awaits everyone.

## BC Parks Reservation Service

The BC Parks Discover Camping reservation service enables visitors to book a site that suits their individual needs with confidence so they can arrive at their site knowing it is assured. The service can be used to plan travel, view site availability, reserve and manage bookings.

The reservation system:

- offers consumers certainty and peace of mind in trip planning;
- provides fair and equitable access to high demand sites; and
- improves business efficiencies and customer service.

The service charges for using the BC Parks Discover Camping reservation service to make a reservation, changes and/or cancellations are the same today as the amount that visitors paid in 1996 when the service was started.

In 2012/13, enhancements to the reservation service included:

- one reservation charge to book double sites together;
- the ability to book group sites up to a year in advance of the arrival date; and
- Berg Lake trail reservations opening on January 2 for the entire following season.

In 2012, the BC Parks Discover Camping Reservation Service offered local, national and international visitors access to campsites in 94 provincial parks in 103 campgrounds. This included 78 group campsites, eight picnic areas, three yurts, two cabins and over 4,600 frontcountry campsites for a total of 4,750 individual resources on the reservation system.

More than 106,926 reservations were made through Discover Camping in 2012 (more than a 10 percent increase from the 2011 season). Ninety-four percent of the reservations were made on the internet; six percent were made through the call centre (a decrease of three percent from 2011). In terms of revenue, 2012 is the first year that more than 50 percent of BC Parks' user fees were collected through the Discover Camping Reservation service (\$8,102,619 out of \$14,967,786) for a total of 54 percent.

### Discover Camping Customer Profile



For more information about BC Parks' reservation service and its policies, please visit: [BC Parks Reservation Service](#) or to make a reservation, visit [Discover Camping](#).

### The BC Parks Backcountry Registration System

In 2012, visitors could purchase backcountry permits for 27 provincial parks through the Discover Camping system. This system differs from the reservation system in two ways:

- there are no service charges to purchase backcountry permits online; and,
- the registration system is not a reservation and does not guarantee a site; it is simply a convenient, alternate way to pay for backcountry permits prior to arriving in the park.

2012 represents the first complete season the BC Parks Backcountry Registration System was in effect. In 2012, 2,099 permits were sold through the backcountry registration system, representing \$99,460 in revenue.

For more information visit the [BC Parks Backcountry Registration site](#) or the [Discover Camping Backcountry Registration site](#) to view sites and to register for a backcountry permit.



Sites Where BC Parks Backcountry Permits are Available Online

### Attendance

Attendance information is used by BC Parks to assist in the evaluation and planning for the operation and management of British Columbia's protected areas system.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Day Use Visits	17,132,601	16,813,262	18,215,709
Camping Visits	2,358,896	2,315,411	2,436,015
Marine Visits	187,488	207,454	150,284
<b>Total Attendance</b>	<b>19,678,984</b>	<b>19,336,127</b>	<b>20,802,008</b>

#### What it means:

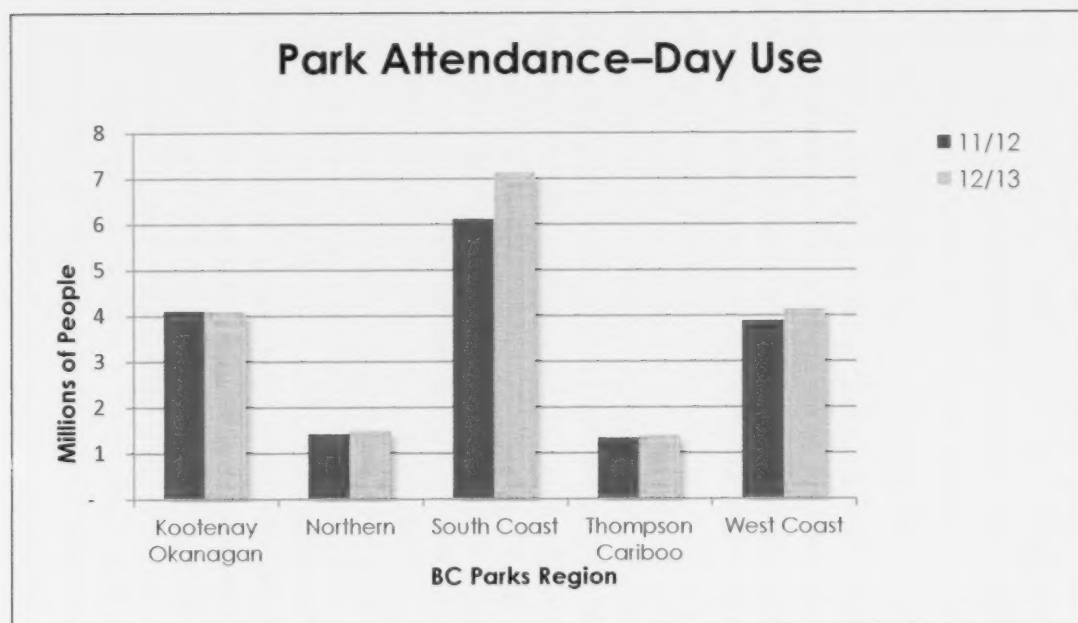
The number of visitors to provincial protected areas is used to measure the contribution of protected areas to the government's priorities of healthy communities, tourism and the economy. Visitation is affected by facilities and services, but is also strongly influenced by external factors such as local weather conditions, the value of the Canadian dollar and general tourism trends.

Overall attendance in 2012/13 increased by 7.6 percent over the previous year. A large part of this increase can be attributed to a general improvement in weather after an exceptionally cold and rainy summer in 2011 throughout many areas of the province. An improvement in data reporting practices, a result of the implementation of a new attendance reporting system, also contributed to the increase.

Day use attendance increased by 8.3 percent overall, with increases showing in the South Coast, Thompson Cariboo and West Coast regions. After a rainy 2011 summer, day use attendance rose to its highest level in several years in 2012. Camping attendance also increased by 5.2 percent overall. The Northern Region saw the largest increase, as attendance levels returned to normal levels after flooding caused the closure of many of the region's highways in 2011.

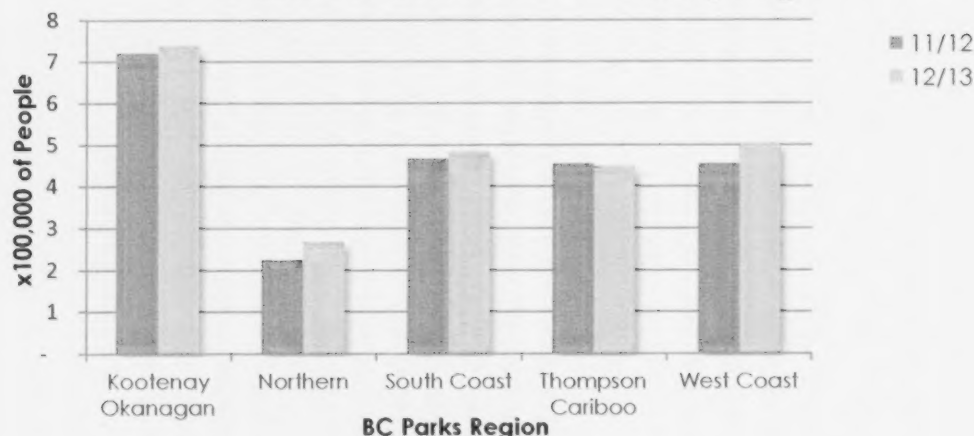
#### How it's measured:

BC Parks tracks attendance through campground registrations, trail and traffic counters and visual counts. In order to have standard, comparable information, all "visits" are stated in person days (so one person staying for two days counts as two "visits"). Average party sizes are applied to daily counts of cars, boats, camping parties, etc., to obtain the number of actual visits. Average party sizes are based on detailed party composition information collected through the annual visitor satisfaction surveys.





## Park Attendance-Camping



## Visitor Satisfaction

BC Parks is committed to ensuring visitors have a safe, fun experience in campgrounds with clean, well-run facilities and services.

The BC Parks Visitor Satisfaction Survey assesses client satisfaction with protected areas and campground facilities and services by asking campground and day-use visitors about their experience.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR		2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Percentage of visitors that are satisfied with their visit	Target:	80	80	80
	Actual:	80	82	79

### What it means:

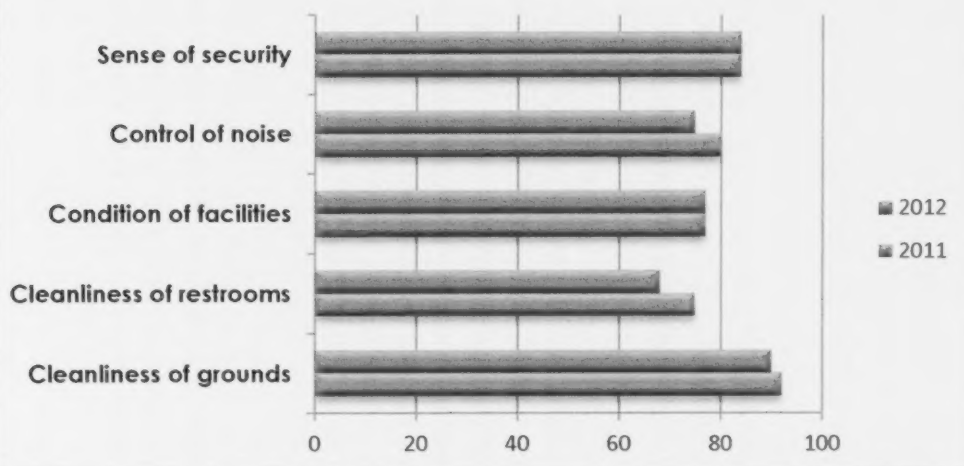
Park Facility Operator performance remains at a high overall level. The overall visitor satisfaction rating in 2012/13 was 79 percent, a slight drop from 82 percent in 2011. Campground visitors remained highly satisfied with the cleanliness of the grounds (90 percent rated this as excellent or above average) and sense of security (84 percent). The ratings given to condition of facilities (77 percent excellent or above average) remained unchanged from 2011, while control of noise (75 percent) and cleanliness of washrooms (68 percent) experienced slight declines. BC Parks will continue to work with Park Facility Operators to improve these services and ensure visitors are highly satisfied with their stay in provincial campgrounds.

### How it's measured:

Key parks are surveyed on a rotational basis, every 4 years. Surveys are usually undertaken from mid-May to the first week of September. BC Parks overall visitor satisfaction rating is based on an index of visitor responses to five questions about services:

- cleanliness of restrooms
- cleanliness of grounds
- sense of security
- control of noise
- condition of facilities.

## % Excellent and Above Average



### Improving Visitor Facilities

*BC Parks endeavours to be responsive to the changing interests and demands of a visiting public and to maintain the high satisfaction rating awarded by the visitors.*

The strategic direction of the capital investment program is to offer visitors a safe and welcoming environment that reflects the core natural, recreation and cultural values of BC Parks. Projects funded will attract families, offer new recreation opportunities, improve accessibility, protect visitor health and safety, and increase revenue and attendance.

In 2012, BC Parks received an extra \$3 million for the 2012/13 operating year representing a 27 percent increase over the previous year. Over the past five years, BC Parks has invested approximately \$56 million in facilities in the province. The replacement value of the buildings and land improvements in British Columbia's protected areas system is approximately \$700 million.

Projects completed in 2012/13 include:

Rathtrevor Beach Park	► \$560,000	To reconstruct the campground and improve day-use areas such as benches and picnic tables. This is a multi-year project.
Liard River Hot Springs Park	► \$700,000	Project to build a new deck and change houses around the hot spring pool as well as improving accessibility for visitors with mobility issues. (see Success Story)
Wells Gray Park	► \$275,000	Upgrades to the visitor centre and the road to access the centre.



Kikomun Creek Park	► \$ 53,000	Installation of accessible picnic tables, new signage and improvements to the trail system. The park has seen substantial improvements for the past five years.
Kettle River Recreation Area	► \$490,000	Expansion of the campground including 28 new campsites, picnic tables, flush toilets and more trails linking existing campground loops.
Garibaldi Park	► \$750,000	A new 30-site backcountry campground, toilets and picnic shelter around Elfin Lakes. Included are improvements to the access road and upgrading of park ranger stations.
Herald Park	► \$110,000	New picnic tables in the campground and day-use areas.
Lakelse Lake Park	► \$225,000	Improvements to the day-use change house toilet and shower building as well as new picnic tables and sanitation facilities.
Martha Creek Park	► \$643,000	Reconstruction of the campground including the addition of new lakeshore campsites and other infrastructure such as picnic tables.

Several other high use provincial parks have seen recent capital investments:

Goldstream Park	► \$150,000	Start of a multi-year project to refurbish the campgrounds.
Cultus Lake Park	► \$420,000	Planning for a campground expansion, installation of accessible picnic tables and completion of renovations for toilet and shower buildings.
Golden Ears Park	► \$200,000	Renovation and restoration of the day use area.
Shuswap Lake Park	► \$180,000	Septic field problems addressed and completed refurbishment of toilet/shower buildings.
Kokanee Creek Park	► \$775,000	A campground expansion and a new toilet/shower building.

#### BC Parks Capital Facilities Program Investments

<b>Capital Facilities Program</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>
Campground and day use areas	\$3,088,400	\$2,097,800	\$7,785,961
Toilet and shower buildings	\$2,128,000	\$2,137,000	\$1,695,896
Water and sewer systems	\$2,066,500	\$1,419,500	\$1,112,253
Roads and trails	\$1,670,100	\$854,000	\$1,608,290
Other buildings and structures*	\$1,427,000	\$4,385,700	\$1,677,942
<b>Total Facilities Capital Expenditures</b>	<b>\$10,380,000</b>	<b>\$10,894,000</b>	<b>\$13,880,342</b>

\* Other buildings and structures include picnic shelters, boat launches, viewing platforms, heritage building restorations, etc.

### Success Story—Kids Bike Parks

During a recent capital upgrade to the popular Alice Lake Park, located in the Lower Mainland, the old playground was removed and replaced with a more modern style playground, which placed an emphasis on using natural elements as the main features. This style of playground is becoming increasingly popular as a means for kids to become more creative in their play times, by giving them the opportunity to develop their own interpretation of how to play with the components of the play structure.

Included in this playground rebuild was installing an area where kids could practice bike-handling skills in a safe environment. Previously, the campground roads were used as racetracks by youngsters riding around on their bikes and led to many close calls with traffic. By dedicating a seldom-used area of the day use area for kid-friendly cycling, a small loops track was created that isolates the kids in a safer environment. The cost of building the trails was less than \$10,000 for gravel and machine time.



The main loop area is a 150-metre circle with small branches that offer different obstacles to help improve skills. There is a bumpy rock section, a log ride, a rock drop and rock roll which will help kids learn different skills for handling their bikes. Inside the main loop is a "pump track" which is an area that has small rollers and banked corners and teaches kids to go around without pedalling.

The track has been extremely successful, with both the local residents and visitors. It is not uncommon for 40 kids to be lined to use the track while siblings are playing on the nearby playset.

BC Parks has also expanded these bike tracks into campgrounds in Nairn Falls and Rath Trevor Beach parks with similar successes.

### Success Story—Liard River Hot Springs Park Deck and Change Room Replacement

Liard River Hot Springs Park is one of BC Parks most iconic and unique protected areas. Located on the Alaska Highway four hours north of Fort Nelson and about two hours south of the Yukon border, it is a must stop for northern adventure travellers. Its natural hot springs sooth tired travellers from all over the globe.

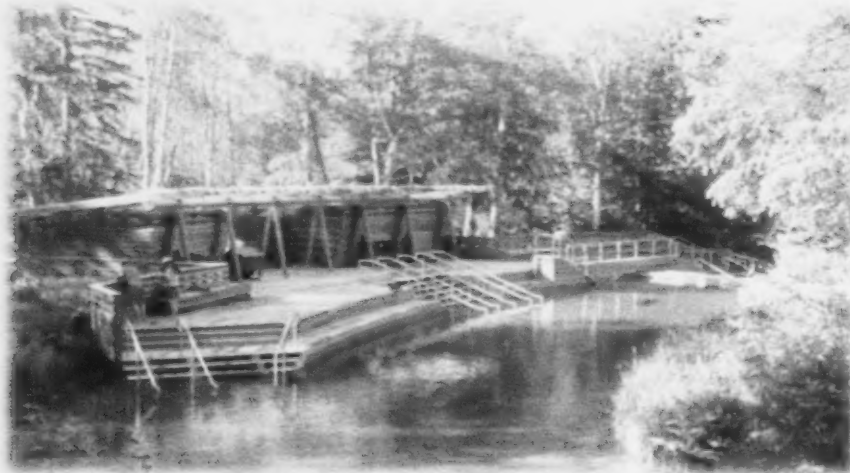
The deck and change rooms were last replaced in 1989. The extreme temperatures and the minerals in the water took their toll on these structures, requiring total replacement. The challenge was with what to replace the structures. BC Parks wanted a new structure that could last at least 50 years, blend into the natural park setting, as well as not compromise the fragile and rare hot springs ecosystem.

All of the materials chosen for this project were carefully selected to meet a number of factors including aesthetics, longevity in a harsh environment and low maintenance requirements. The entire foundation of the new facility is set on a special metal piles foundation and for the deck and substructure; an extremely strong and durable natural wood was selected. None of these materials will adversely affect the ecosystem.

Alfred Waugh, a First Nations architect, designed a beautiful facility which met all technical and environmental requirements and also celebrates First Nations culture. The design represents a hunting camp, which is traditionally a simple but effective shelter. The "A" frame fir log column supports, the cedar cladding and the transparent roof membrane give the structure a warm, welcoming feel. The cedar cladding will naturally turn silvery grey over time and blend into its surroundings. It invites visitors to relax and enjoy the hot springs all year.

The construction phase of the project began in September 2012 and was substantially completed by November 2012. It was a difficult task to remove all of the old structure and transport material for the new structure to the site, along almost a kilometre of boardwalk. Builders had to contend with early freezing temperatures and spartan living conditions, however their commitment to building a one of a kind facility shows in the superb craftsmanship they put into their work.

Comments from the visitors to the park give high praise to both the obvious quality of the structure, the functional design and to how it complements the natural setting. This unique and beautiful facility will continue to draw northern travellers and locals alike to stop and enjoy the warm and relaxing hot springs for many decades to come.



## Public Safety

*BC Parks strives to provide high quality and safe recreation opportunities for visitors.*

## Compliance and Enforcement

*Park Rangers patrol protected areas across the province, making contact with thousands of visitors each year. In most cases, Park Rangers use education and negotiation to achieve voluntary compliance with protected areas rules and regulations.*

In 2012/13, the most common offences were related to unrestrained domestic animals, failing to obey signs, unauthorized activities and trespass. BC Parks utilizes a combination of approaches (including public relations, warnings, evictions, violation tickets, *Park Act* orders, and court prosecution) and agencies (Conservation Officers, Natural Resource Officers, RCMP and local police) to ensure the protection of the public and natural and cultural values contained in the protected areas.

BC Parks staff continued to be actively involved on natural resource sector inter-agency teams during 2012/13. Key partner agencies include the Conservation Officer Service, Ministry of Forest, Lands and Natural Resource Operations Natural Resource Officers and the RCMP. Joint compliance and enforcement activities involving BC Parks included campfire ban enforcement, long weekends compliance and enforcement projects (e.g., Tribune Bay Park, Juan de Fuca Marine Park (see Success Story below), and Liard River Hot Springs Park) and monitoring illegal snowmobiling inside and outside protected areas.

#### *Success Story—Compliance Action Planning for Juan de Fuca Park (Sombrio Beach)*

Sombrio Beach is a popular backcountry camping and day use area within Juan de Fuca Park on Vancouver Island. Sombrio Beach can be accessed from the Juan de Fuca Marine Trail or about a 10-minute walk from the Sombrio Beach parking lot.

In previous years there has been a very large (400-600) gathering of young people partying at Sombrio Beach during the May long weekend. Past compliance and enforcement efforts have included some limited Park Ranger support and Park Facility Operator support. Other enforcement agencies (RCMP, Conservation Officer Service, Ministry of Forest, Lands and Natural Resource Operations Natural Resource Officers) have also supported BC Parks in managing public safety and park security but their capacity to assist has been limited to infrequent patrols, when possible.

In 2012, BC Parks implemented a Compliance Action Plan. The plan included support from the RCMP, Conservation Officer Service, Ministry of Forest, Lands and Natural Resource Operations Natural Resource Officers and the Park Facility Operator. The gate at the access road to Sombrio Beach was managed to restrict vehicle access. Observations of many vehicles appearing at the access road during the first two days of the access closure indicated that a large gathering would have occurred if not for the road closure and presence of Park Rangers and RCMP. The Compliance Action Plan proved very successful in preventing the large "rave party" and BC Parks received significant positive feedback from the public, stakeholders and the RCMP.





# Engaging the Public

---

## Community Engagement

*In the context of rapidly changing demographics and increasingly diverse communities across the province, BC Parks aims to stay relevant and connect with the public in meaningful ways. Throughout 2012, BC Parks was involved with community partnerships, youth engagement initiatives and public events.*

## Youth Engagement

*Inspiring the next generation of British Columbia's protected area users.*

Get Outside BC is a collaborative youth leadership project that aims to strengthen youth attachment to British Columbia's protected areas by empowering young leaders across the province. The project is a partnership between BC Parks, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society-BC Chapter (CPAWS-BC), Mountain Equipment Co-op, and the Child and Nature Alliance of Canada.

The purpose of the project is to connect youth to the outdoors in a meaningful and sustainable way by giving them a sense of purpose and the capacity to inspire others to spend more time in the outdoors. The goal of the three-phased project is to provide both a gateway experience for youth engagement with British Columbia's wilderness and subsequent opportunities for engagement through youth-led follow-up events and the creation of a supportive youth network of natural leaders. Rather than providing a one-time experience, Get Outside BC aims to provide youth with the tools and resources to develop an enduring connection to the outdoors and a lifelong identity as a natural leader.

### Success Story—Park Rangers Inspire Youth at Get Outside BC 2012

---

Three Park Rangers participated in this year's Get Outside BC Youth Leadership Summit in Squamish in early July 2012. The Summit brought together 40 young leaders, between the ages of 13 and 18, from across British Columbia to participate in leadership and outdoor skills training, networking and community event planning. The Summit took place on July 3-7, 2012 at the North Vancouver Outdoor School and Alice Lake Park in Squamish. Along with the BC Parks Provincial Community Engagement Specialist, the Park Rangers taught the youth essential camping skills, inspired them as green job mentors and judged their creative skits with enthusiasm.

It was a wonderful few days engaging with the next generation of Park Rangers. The youth are now back in their communities hosting youth events in their local parks.





## BC Parks Passport Program



After the very successful BC Parks Passport Program that took place during the BC Parks centennial year (2011), BC Parks, in partnership with Park Facility Operators, Visitor Centres and the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC (Learn to Fish Program), launched the BC Parks Passport Program for May 2012 to December 2013.

The program receives sponsorship support from the Camping and RVing BC Coalition and British Columbia Magazine. Participants receive a high quality BC Parks Passport at provincial parks and visitor centres across the province, and collect stickers and stamps to win special prizes. Over 200 parks and visitor centres participate in this popular program, and visitors are encouraged to visit British Columbia's parks and visitor centres, and participate in Learn to Fish programs. The passport also contains trip planning and other useful information about BC Parks programs and services.

## Camping and RVing BC Coalition

BC Parks is a key member of the Camping and RVing BC Coalition which was created to better coordinate marketing initiatives for this important sector of the economy. Current members of the non-profit coalition include: BC Parks, the British Columbia Lodging and Campgrounds Association, Destination BC, Recreation Sites and Trails BC, RV Rental Association of Canada, Northern BC Tourism Association, RV Dealers Association of BC, The BC Society of Park Facility Operators, Parks Canada and Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC. BC Parks has derived great benefit from being a member of the coalition by leveraging additional resources to better market BC Parks and support BC Parks' programs.

In 2012/13, the coalition focussed on: updating website and social media information for campers and RVers including trip planning information; focussed media outreach in British Columbia and Alberta as well as some limited outreach to the USA and international media, print and on-line advertising campaign; attendance at eight major trade shows in British Columbia and Alberta; sponsorship support for the BC Parks Passport Program; fishing video production targeting Campers and RVers; and support for Parks Canada Learn to Camp program and Asian Outreach Strategy.

## Learn to Fish Program in BC Parks

The Learn to Fish program, run by the non-profit Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC, is a free program designed to attract new anglers to recreational fishing, particularly youth and their families. The program has a strong focus on conservation and increasing environmental awareness. The Learn to Fish program has been running in BC Parks since 2006 and has expanded every year since 2006.

2012 was the best year yet for the program in BC Parks with 2,765 participants in 78 programs at 19 different locations in British Columbia's parks.



*Learn to Fish Program at Kennedy Lake Park*

The partnership between BC Parks and the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC not only teaches youth and their families how to fish and the importance of conservation measures but provides a great recreational opportunity in British Columbia's parks.

### BC Parks Website

The BC Parks website continues to be one of the most popular websites within the British Columbian government.

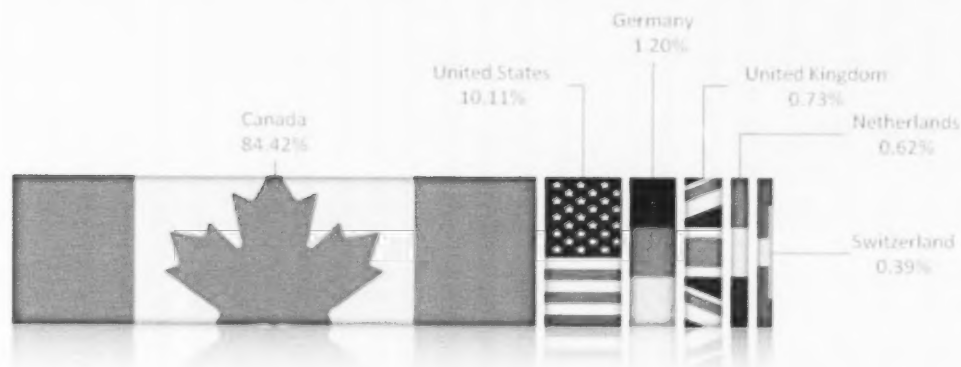
The website provides real time information about protected areas and serves as an essential communication tool for BC Parks and an information focal point for the public, including:

- vital public health and safety messaging (campfire bans/protected area closures, flood alerts, wildlife issues, avalanche alerts, protected area related health alerts);
- policy and user information for the Discover Camping reservation service and links to the service;
- protected area information (fees, location maps, activities/facilities available);
- opportunities for public review and comment on draft management plans;
- conservation information (natural and cultural values);
- volunteers (volunteer opportunities/initiatives, stories and interactive blog);
- opportunities to support British Columbia's protected areas system through partnerships and sponsorship; and
- events calendar and links to public initiatives and promotional programs.

In 2012, the BC Parks website had an average of over 8,000 visits each day and the average visitor spends more than seven minutes on the website.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Number of unique visits to BC Parks website	2,381,450	2,629,187	2,960,028
Average visits per day	4,736	6,647	8,109

2012/13 Visits to BC Parks Website by Country



#### What it means:

Use of the website grew by over 12.6 percent from 2011/2012 to 2012/2013 with almost three million visits to the website. Although the majority of visitors to the website are from within Canada, a significant number are from the United States and other international destinations.

#### BC Parks Facebook Site

BC Parks has a prominent social media presence with its Facebook site. Through Facebook, BC Parks is engaging the public and other protected areas agencies and park-friendly businesses and organizations by sharing photographs, stories, news about protected areas, and events happening in or around British Columbia's protected areas system.

Launched in 2011, public interaction with the BC Parks Facebook site has been overwhelmingly positive, with visitors, staff and other community members posting comments, photos, stories and engaging with each other and BC Parks. As of March 31, 2013, there are over 4,000 people who have 'liked' the site.

The value of the site for encouraging public engagement was highlighted in October, 2012. BC Parks posted a photograph of a grizzly bear sitting next to a trail, signed and closed due to bear activity. People were asked to comment on what they thought the bear was thinking; according to Facebook numbers, over 11,000 people viewed the post, over 540 commented on it, over 1,100 people liked it, and over 2,300 people shared the post with their friends.

#### How it's measured:

Each unique visit represents one person with a unique address coming to the website. The number of "hits" is often quoted as a web statistic but this is inflated by the number of pages that the visitor clicks (so one visit can involve 10 or more hits).



# Economic and Financial Benefits

## Revenues and Operating Expenditures

A wide variety of recreation, commercial and research opportunities are provided by British Columbia's protected areas system, which is the single largest recreation operation in the province.

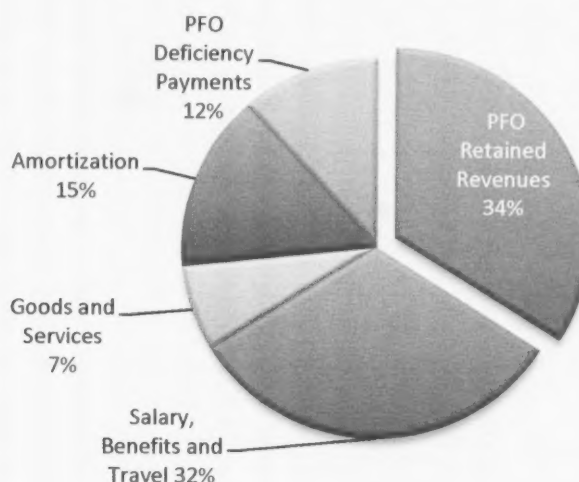
In 2012/13, camping, boating and day use fees generated about \$16.3 million in revenue. Another \$1.4 million in fees for activities requiring park use permits was collected. The majority of these revenues are re-invested in the protected areas system. Of this revenue, \$16 million is retained by Park Facility Operators to help pay for operating and contract costs.

### BC Parks

Revenues and Operating Expenditures  
2012/13

BC Parks' Operating Budget (vote): \$31.1M

Total Operating Expenditures  
(vote plus retained revenue): \$47.1M



### BC Parks Revenues (in millions)

Type of Fee	Total		Retained by PFOs		Paid to Crown	
	2011/12	2012/13	2011/12	2012/13	2011/12	2012/13
Recreation User Fees	\$15.5	\$16.3	\$15.0	\$16.0	\$0.5	\$0.3
Permit Fees	\$1.5	\$1.4	\$0	\$0	\$1.5	\$1.4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$17.0</b>	<b>\$17.7</b>	<b>\$15.0</b>	<b>\$16.0</b>	<b>\$2.0</b>	<b>\$1.7</b>

#### Notes:

- All fees paid for the right to use protected areas (park use permit fees) are paid into government's consolidated revenue fund.
- Some recreation user fees are also paid into government's consolidated revenue fund. These include: excess camping fees from profitable operations and miscellaneous revenues such as Maquinna Marine Park hot spring user fees and some backcountry fees.
- PFOs=Park Facility Operators.
- PFO Deficiency Payments are public funds provided to Park Facility Operators to cover the portion of operating costs that exceed revenues generated from recreation user fees.

## Park Use Permits

Park use permits are used to manage various types of commercial, land use and research activities that take place in British Columbia's protected areas system, and ensure that these activities conform to park and protected area values.

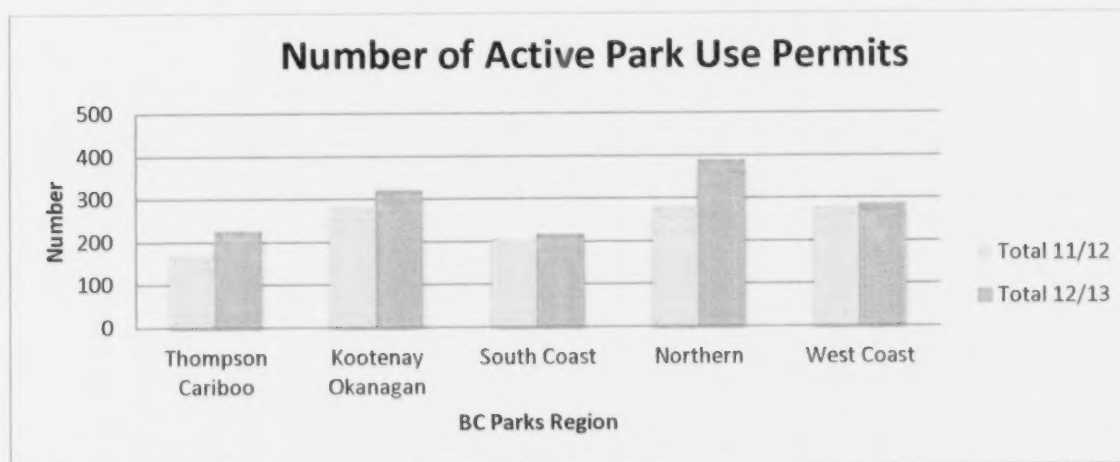
In 2012/13, BC Parks managed approximately 1,423 permits (compared to 1,212 permits in 2011/12) covering a wide variety of purposes including commercial recreation, filming, communication sites and research activities. Revenues for park use permits decreased by 7 percent to about \$1.4 million in 2012/13. An extended ski season in 2011/12 led to a temporary increase in ski hill permit revenue that year.

Active Park Use Permits

Permit Type	2011/12	2012/13
Commercial Services	445	507
Land Use Occupancy	421	520
Ecological Reserve	32	30
Trapline	98	141
Film	43	37
Research	138	133
Other	35	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,212</b>	<b>1,423</b>

### Notes:

- Numbers do not include Park Facility Operators.
- Commercial Services includes recreational, big game, angle guiding and associated structures, transportation, special events and accommodation.
- Land Use/Occupancy includes structures, utilities, roads, etc.





## Economic Benefits

*Protected areas generate significant economic benefits for the Province by supporting tourism, providing jobs, and generating tax revenue for government.*

Spending on programs by BC Parks and visitors has a substantial and recurring impact on the provincial economy. Investment in the protected areas system creates jobs, generates income for local businesses and produces tax revenue for the government every year. People from inside and outside the province are drawn to the many spectacular places that are managed and protected by BC Parks.

In July 2011, *The Economic Impact of Canada's National, Provincial and Territorial Parks in 2009* (prepared by The Outspan Group Inc.) was released by the Canadian Parks Council. This report shows that:

- The \$47 million in operating and capital expenditures (excludes amortization) by BC Parks and Park Facility Operators led to \$394 million in expenditures by visitors. In other words, every \$1 invested in the protected areas system generated \$8.42 in visitor spending on food, entertainment, transportation and other goods and services.
- Provincial park-related spending generated over \$28 million in tax revenues (sales and production taxes only, does not include income tax effects), returning 60 percent of BC Parks' capital and operating expenditures.
- The combined economic impact of this spending is a \$392 million boost to the national GDP and over 5,200 full-time jobs.

Protected areas also provide indirect economic benefits by supporting public health. While physical and mental health issues impose significant health care costs on the economy, protected areas have a positive impact on public health, alleviating this economic burden. Furthermore, protected areas protect the "services" provided by nature's ecosystems—clean air, clean water and moderation of climate.

For more information on BC Parks and the protected areas system including information in this report, visit the [BC Parks website](#).